

Icebreaker: Share with your group a dream you've had that inspired you or a nightmare you've had that haunts you.

Read and Discuss:

Lectio Divina [read; meditate; pray; contemplate]: If you think your group will have time, read all of Acts 10 aloud and have your group share what stands out to them in the passage.

1. What kind of prayer practices do you use currently? Are they daily, weekly, monthly, or occasional practices? Do you practice prayer alone or with others?
2. In Psalm 51:17, David writes, "My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart." For David, to come to God with a broken and contrite heart is what helps to make prayer authentic. What do you think makes prayer authentic?
3. There are different kinds of prayers. Of these listed, share which is easiest for you or most difficult for you: requests to God, praise to God, giving thanks, listening to God, being silent, or confession of sin.
4. In Acts 10 we see Cornelius described as "devout" and one who "prayed to God regularly." Cornelius listens to God speak and he acts. When have you felt God speaking to you? How did you confirm that it was from God?
5. In Acts 10, both Cornelius and Peter are people who pray and both are interrupted by God speaking to them. What, if any, practices do you engage in that open you up to be interrupted by God?
6. In Acts 10:29 Peter asks Cornelius why he had asked Peter to come. God called Peter (in the vision) and now he wonders why he is there. Have you ever been called by God to do something or go somewhere and, in the the midst of it, wonder why you're there? If so, share that experience.

Prayer:

Share your prayer requests with one another and also remember those from our church family:

- > Prayers of comfort for Lori and BJ Nichols and family in the death of Lori's father and for Mary Beth and Ron Bell and family in the death of Mary Beth's sister.
- > Prayers of healing for Sue Armstrong, John Lindenschmidt, and Robie Strickland.
- > Prayers for the team and guests of the Boy's Awakening that took place in our building this past weekend.
- > On Sunday at the 10:30 am service we commission the Romania Short Term Missions Team. Pray for them as they serve from March 9-20.

Reminders for your group:

- > Encourage group members to join in ZPC's Lenten reading of the gospels. Schedules available at zpc.org.
- > We have many service opportunities available for your group. Check them out at zpc.org/current-opportunities.

Leader's notes:

There are many ways to look at prayer. Prayer can be as simple as praying ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. Prayer can be simple and profound by humbly praying the Lord's Prayer. Prayer can be contemplative as we are silent and listen for God's voice. Prayer can be joyful as we sing praise to God and pray with others as the body of Christ. May this discussion encourage your group's prayer life and encourage individual group members to pray more deeply as well.

Lectio Divina: We did this practice last week as well. It is an ancient practice to read the scripture slowly aloud, listening well, and then seeing what God is saying to each person. Acts 10 is a long passage, so judge for yourselves if you have time for this practice.

[Question 1] This is just an opportunity for your group members to share. Don't be surprised at their answers. Some people may only pray at church or in home group or at meals, while others may have a robust prayer life. This is a good question to get people talking about prayer.

[Question 2] Psalm 51 is a classic Psalm from David – a prayer of confession after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba. The prayer reads as if David is truly pouring out his heart to God. It is a good prayer in regards to heartfelt, authentic prayer. Part of what makes prayer authentic is a contrite heart, and what makes prayer inauthentic is for someone to pray words that they are just saying or reciting without believing.

[Question 3] Again, this is a question to get people talking about their own prayer lives. Many will answer that requests are easiest to pray. That is normal. We can also give praise and thanks. We praise God for who God is and we thank God for what God has done. Encourage your group through Acts 10 that being silent and listening to God are important parts of prayer, as Cornelius and Peter found out as God spoke to them.

[Question 4] If we are faithful to God, God will use us. God speaks to Cornelius. Cornelius listens and acts on what he heard. God speaks to us as well. When God speaks, we can confirm it by asking: Is it scriptural? Do others confirm it? Does God bring it to pass? If I do what I think God says, does it produce good fruit?

[Question 5] Interruptions in our days can be God stepping into our lives with opportunities. We can be open to God's interruptions by beginning and ending our days with prayer – so we are ready to see God at work. We can have an open mind and open eyes to look for God at work. We can be present in the moment, whatever is happening, be there and don't wish that time away. When we sense God is interrupting us, we can listen carefully and ask the Holy Spirit to guide us to do the right thing.

[Question 6] We can learn from scripture by applying it to our own lives. Peter listens to God and responds and then asks why. We can ask why God is doing something in our lives, too. Share your experiences of wondering why God called you to go somewhere or do something. Did you get an answer as to why God chose you for that situation?